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PROTECTING FERNS FROM INSECT PESTS

Common enemies of ferns grown indoors are mealy bugs, red spiders, and the aphis or green fly, according to _____.
(Extension Horticulturist)
And of these three, the mealy bug is probably the worst. This white woolly insect works close to the bottom and on the under sides of the fronds. It can be removed with a splint or toothpick around which a little swab of cotton has been wrapped. If the plant is badly infested, cut off all the top of the fern within an inch of the soil, and treat it thoroughly each day until all the insects are exterminated, then a new top can be grown.

Red spider is a minute sucking insect that thrives in a dry atmosphere. It can be kept in check by washing or spraying the top of the fern with clear water. The aphis or green fly may be eradicated by washing in water containing soap and a few drops of nicotine sulphate.

_____ recommends an occasional bath for ferns. Lay them on their sides and wash with soapsuds made by dissolving an ounce of a good grade of soap in a gallon of tepid water. Rinse thoroughly and be careful not to injure the fronds or to let the soapy water get into the soil.

To keep house ferns in good health, _____ advises watering the plants about once a month with water containing household ammonia, one teaspoonful of ammonia to two quarts of water. Prepared plant foods may be used, following directions on the package.

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